

CT General Assembly
Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

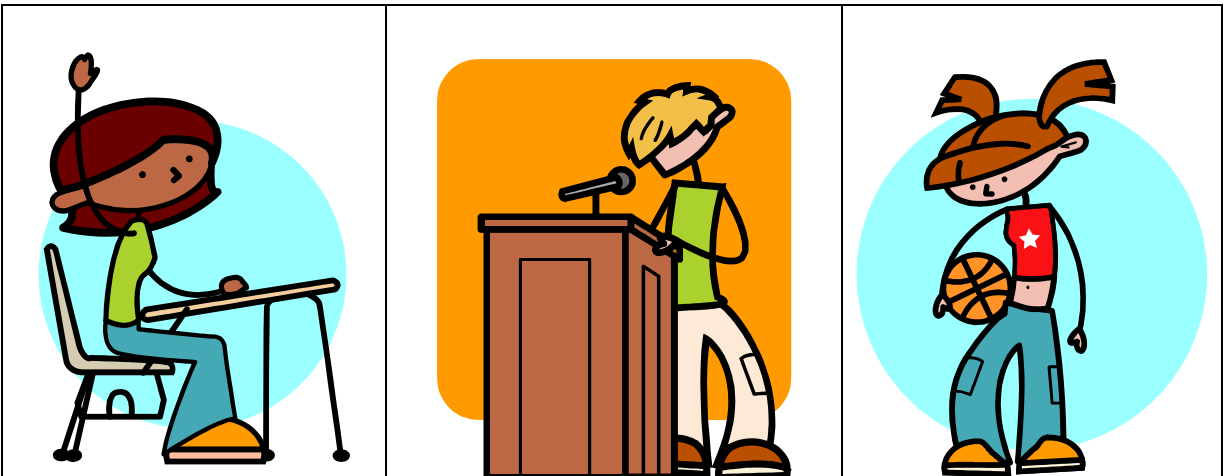


Teen Poll

Connecticut Teens: Confident but Perceptions of Choices Limited

January 2007

conducted for the PCSW by



Permanent Commission on the Status of Women Teen Poll
Connecticut Teens: Confident but Perceptions of Choices Limited

Purpose

- to examine the everyday challenges and issues, hopes for the future, and career interests and goals of teens in Connecticut.
- to gather perceptions on issues and challenges that young women face in their everyday lives and to note differences in perception between young men and women.

Key Findings

Summary

Connecticut teens are optimistic and confident about their futures. They believe in gender equality related to abilities and career opportunities, unfortunately they believe their choices are limited by attitudes and issues of safety. Poll findings are consistent with the priorities identified by the Young Women's Leadership Program -- a project of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

Economic Security



American teens plan to get a professional degree than White teens.

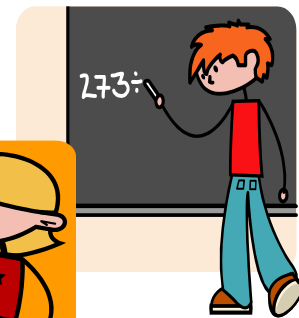
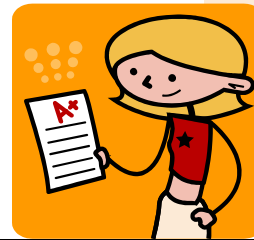
Teens are optimistic and confident about their future—both their education and family life. 95% of teens are confident they will finish high school and get a job. Career interests are varied among the polling sample. And, there is a notable science and technology gap in the interests of males and females. Females show more interest in the arts, and males are more focused on science, business, and technology. It is interesting to note that more African



Careers of interests for Connecticut teens

	Total	Female	Male
Science/engineering	12%	5%	21%
Business	10%	6%	15%
Arts, Acting & Music	9%	14%	3%
Doctor	8%	10%	6%
IT (web, programming, etc.)	6%	2%	11%
Journalist/Editor/Writer	4%	6%	2%
Education (general)	4%	6%	1%
Teaching	4%	6%	3%

Economic issues are a concern for teens, particularly related to jobs and the cost of education. For example, slightly more females (66%) than males (57%) say that having more affordable college or job training would improve their lives "a great deal."



Connecticut teens are concerned about economics

Percent saying these things would improve their lives "a great deal"				
	African - American Teens	White Teens	All Teens	
			Females	Males
Getting a job (having a job)	67%	60%	64%	60%
More affordable college or job training	71%	60%	66%	57%
Going to a safer school	63%	35%	53%	23%

Teens believe in gender equality related to opportunities and abilities.

For example,

- More than 80% of teens agree that girls and boys are equally good at math and science.
- The vast majority (91%) of teens say that men and women are equally qualified to be president.
- Almost 100% believe in equal pay for equal work for men and women.

<i>Beliefs about equity and careers</i>		
Percent of teens agreeing		
	Female	Male
Women and men can do any kind of work, but attitudes or discrimination limit these choices.	54%	45%
Women and men should be able to work in any kind of job.	30%	29%
There are some jobs that are better for women and others that are better for men.	16%	26%

What do I want to be....? What can I do....?

Teens believe that women and men can succeed equally at most jobs, yet attitudes and discrimination limit their choices.

- Notably, more females (54%) than males (45%) believe that attitudes or discrimination limit their career choices. **More than half of young women polled believe that attitudes or discrimination limit their career choices.**
- More males (26%) than females (16%) believe that there are some jobs that are more appropriate based on gender.

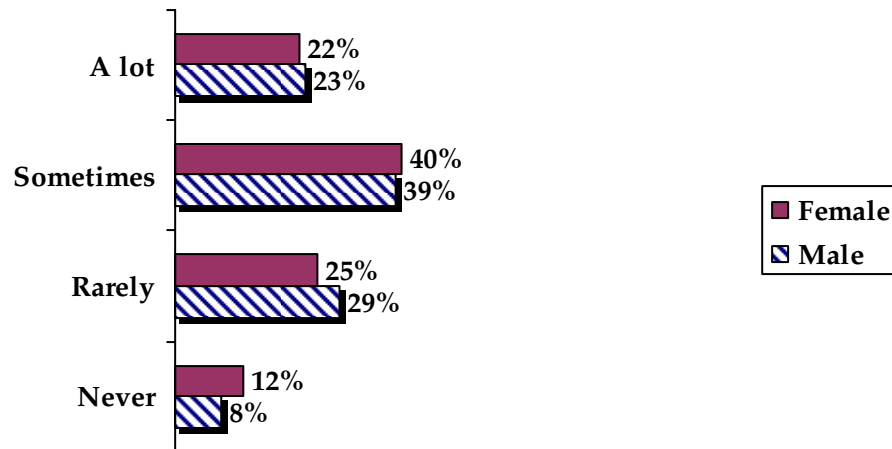
		Total	Female	Male
a. Construction job	Men could best succeed at these jobs	77%	72%	84%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	0%	1%	0%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	22%	27%	16%
b. Secretary	Men could best succeed at these jobs	1%	1%	1%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	53%	51%	55%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	46%	49%	44%
e. Person who takes care of young children	Men could best succeed at these jobs	0%	1%	0%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	57%	56%	59%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	42%	44%	41%
g. Computer programmer	Men could best succeed at these jobs	26%	24%	29%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	3%	4%	2%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	71%	73%	70%
i. Nurse	Men could best succeed at these jobs	0%	1%	0%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	39%	37%	42%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	60%	62%	58%

Violence against teens

An alarming number of youth are affected by physical abuse, unwanted physical contact, and sexual intimidation.

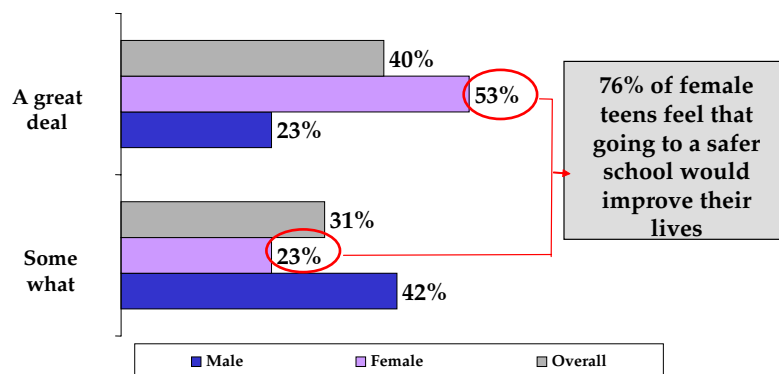
- A striking percentage of teens -- 40%-- know a teen who has been physically abused. (PCSW's survey of adults last fall showed that about half of all women and men personally knew someone who had been physically abused.)

**How often do you feel unwanted physical contact
(pushing, shoving, bullying) happens at school?**

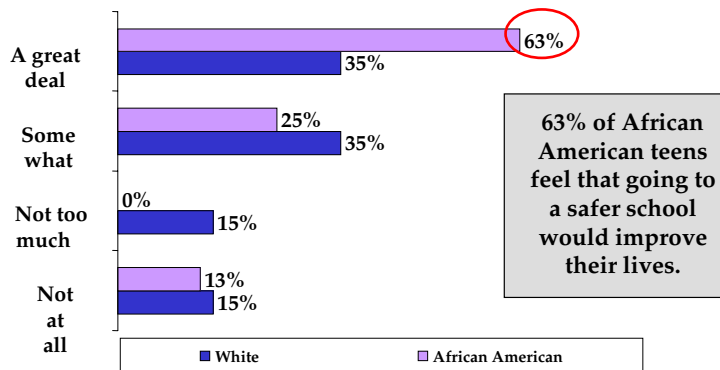


- Almost half of the teens who said they know someone who has been abused (41%), believe that the abuse has limited the teenager's participation in school, sports, social activities, or work.
- Over half (53%) of girls say going to a safer school would make their lives better. Notably, 63% of African American girls say this.

Female Teens Voice More Concern about Safety at Schools



African American Teens Voice More Concern about Safety at Schools

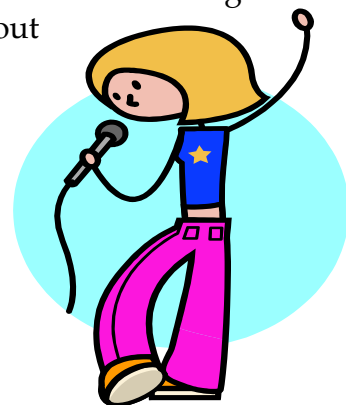


- A sizeable percentage of teens polled -- 42% -- feel that sexual intimidation (e.g., teasing or jeering) happens to teens in their school or town. (PCSW's poll of adults last fall showed similar findings: 40% of adults know a woman who has experienced unwanted sexual behavior.) Almost 17% of youth say sexual intimidation happens "a lot." Notably more **female teens (63%)** than male teens (43%) know a teenager who has experienced unwanted sexual behavior (e.g., unwanted comments, jeers, intimidation, forced physical contact or assault).
- 40% of teens who know someone affected by unwanted sexual behavior say that behavior has limited the teenager's participation in school, sports, social activities, or work.

School, stress and body image

School, family, and body image are viewed as problems for teen girls, although the majority are confident in their looks and do not aspire to look like celebrities.

More males (23%) than females (8%) view body image as a problem for teenage girls. African-American females are much more confident about their appearance – (63% report they like the way they look, while only 34% of White females say this.) These findings are consistent with a national survey of teens and body image which found that 55% of girls age 13-18 feel confident about their bodies.¹ Likewise, African-American girls in the national survey were more confident in their appearance, as was true for Connecticut's African-American teens.



¹ Teen People Body Image Survey, August 2005.

The Biggest Problem Facing Teenage Girls		
	Females	Males
Stress at School	28%	5%
Family/Relationships	11%	14%
Body Image	8%	23%
Peer Pressure	6%	5%
Boys	4%	4%
Drugs	4%	3%

Teens face a variety of stresses in their school, work and family life, and maintaining healthy habits is challenging for teens.

- While 8 in 10 teens agree that exercise makes them feel good, only about 6 in 10 (58%) report that they get enough exercise.
- Adequate sleep is a concern for teens, slightly more so for females than males.

Adults play an important role in the lives of teenagers.

- Almost 3 in 10 teenagers (28%) believe that spending more time with a parent or other adult would improve their lives “a great deal.” An additional 41% feel more adult time would “somewhat” improve their lives.
- Teens feel they could talk to adults about issues in their lives, including
 - School (24%)
 - Their future (20%)
 - General life problems and feelings (19%)

Methodology and Demographics

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis (CSRA) at the University of Connecticut to conduct a telephone survey of teens in Connecticut to gather perceptions on issues and challenges that young women face in their everyday lives. A total of 252 teens, ages 14 through 19, were interviewed, with permission from their parents, from June through November 2006, for this study.

- 56% of respondents are female; 44% are male; all respondents are single.
- 72% of respondents are 15-17 years old.
- An overwhelming majority (89%) are high school students.
- Whites comprise 80% of the respondents; 11% are African American.
- 25% of respondents work part-time; about one-third of employed students work 10-15 hours a week; 25% work over 20 hours; 24% work less than 10 hours.
- 97% of teens plan to vote when they are eligible.

For more information on policies to address young women and men's concerns, see www.cga.ct.gov/pcsw/ywlp.htm. The Young Women's Leadership Program is a project of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. The YWLP provides information, research and analysis to elected officials and the public regarding issues affecting the status of young women.

PCSW Teen Poll 2006
Excerpts of Telephone Survey Questions (Ages 14-19)

3a. Thinking about your education, what are your hopes for the future? (ASK AS OPEN-ENDED / ACCEPT UP TO 3 RESPONSES)? [Percentages sum to more than 100% because of multiple responses.]

	Total	Female	Male
Graduate high school	15%	15%	15%
Go to vocational education school	2%	1%	4%
Attend a community college	3%	4%	2%
Attend 4 year college/university	86%	86%	87%
Work full time	15%	15%	14%
Get a professional/graduate degree	22%	22%	21%
Go to work after raising children	2%	2%	2%
Something else (SPECIFY)	5%	7%	3%
Don't Know	2%	1%	4%
Refused	0%	1%	0%

4. Thinking about your future family life, what are your hopes or goals? (ASK AS OPEN ENDED / ACCEPT UP TO 2 RESPONSES)? [Percentages sum to more than 100% because of multiple responses.]

	Total	Female	Male
Be single	3%	4%	2%
Marry (already married)	79%	81%	76%
Have a civil union	1%	1%	1%
Have children (already have children)	71%	68%	74%
Don't Know	11%	10%	12%

5. How confident are you that you will successfully finish school and get a job?

	Total	Female	Male
Extremely confident	41%	44%	38%
Very confident	54%	51%	56%
Somewhat confident	5%	4%	5%
Not too confident	0%	1%	0%

ONLY ASKED FROM FEMALES

6f. What is the biggest problem facing you as a teenage girl in Connecticut today?
(ASK AS OPEN ENDED)

Stress at school	28%
Family /relationships	11%
Body image	8%
Peer pressure	6%
Drugs	4%
Boys	4%
Job/economic (general)	3%
Bullying	2%
Sex	2%
Cost of education (private school, technical, college)	2%
Conflicts with parents	1%
Drinking	1%
Eating disorders	1%
Job opportunities, training	1%
Understanding how to spend money	1%
Safety (general)	1%
Violence/crime/guns	1%
Other (specify)	15%
Don't Know	6%
Refused	1%

ONLY ASKED FROM MALES

6m. Now please think about the teenage girls you know. What do you think is the biggest problem today facing the teenage girls you know? (ASK AS OPEN ENDED)

Body image	23%
Family /relationships	14%
Sex	6%
Stress at school	5%
Peer pressure	5%
Drinking	4%
Boys	4%
Drugs	3%
Bullying	2%
Conflicts with parents	2%
Eating disorders	1%
Smoking	1%
Equal pay	1%
Job/economic (general)	1%
Job opportunities, training	1%
Other (specify)	16%
Don't Know	11%

7. What type of careers or fields are you interested in? (ASK AS OPEN ENDED)

	Total	Female	Male
Architecture	2%	1%	2%
Aviation (general)	0%	1%	*
Business	10%	6%	15%
Accounting	1%	*	2%
Finance	0%	1%	*
IT (web, programming, etc.)	6%	2%	11%
Sales	0%	1%	*
Charitable/non-profit	1%	1%	1%
Construction/building (general)	0%	*	1%
Firefighter	0%	*	1%
Communication (general)	1%	1%	1%
Journalist/Editor/Writer	4%	6%	2%
TV (broadcast, production, etc.)	2%	1%	3%
Education (general)	4%	6%	1%
Teaching	4%	6%	3%
Administration	0%	1%	*
Government/state (general)	1%	*	2%
Police	1%	*	3%
Healthcare (general)	2%	4%	*
Doctor	8%	10%	6%
Nurse	2%	4%	*
Physical therapy	2%	2%	1%
Psychology	4%	7%	1%
Legal	1%	2%	*
Lawyer	3%	3%	3%
Science/engineering	12%	5%	21%
Sports/entertainment	4%	3%	4%
veterinarian	2%	4%	*
Arts, Acting & Music	9%	14%	3%
Politics	2%	1%	3%
Marketing	1%	2%	*
Automotive	2%	*	4%
Culinary	1%	2%	*
Other (specify)	3%	2%	4%
Don't know	3%	2%	4%

8. Now I'm going to read you a list of jobs. Do you think for each one that men could best succeed at these jobs, women could best succeed at these jobs or both could succeed equally at these jobs? First...

		Total	Female	Male
a. Construction job	Men could best succeed at these jobs	77%	72%	84%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	0%	1%	0%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	22%	27%	16%
b. Secretary	Men could best succeed at these jobs	1%	1%	1%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	53%	51%	55%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	46%	49%	44%
c. Head of a big company	Men could best succeed at these jobs	14%	12%	17%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	3%	5%	1%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	83%	83%	82%
d. Scientist	Men could best succeed at these jobs	7%	9%	5%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	4%	4%	3%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	89%	87%	92%
e. Person who takes care of young children	Men could best succeed at these jobs	0%	1%	0%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	57%	56%	59%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	42%	44%	41%
f. Professional athlete	Men could best succeed at these jobs	18%	15%	22%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	0%	1%	0%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	81%	84%	78%

g. Computer programmer	Men could best succeed at these jobs	26%	24%	29%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	3%	4%	2%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	71%	73%	70%
h. Accountant	Men could best succeed at these jobs	8%	11%	4%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	10%	9%	12%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	82%	81%	84%
i. Nurse	Men could best succeed at these jobs	0%	1%	0%
	Women could best succeed at these jobs	39%	37%	42%
	Both could succeed equally at these jobs	60%	62%	58%

9. I'm going to read you three statements about women and men and work. Which of the three statements do you agree with the most...?

	Total	Female	Male
Women and men should be able to work in any kind of job.	30%	30%	29%
There are some jobs that are better for women and others that are better for men.	20%	16%	26%
Women and men could do any kind of work, but attitudes or discrimination limit these choices.	50%	54%	45%

10. Next I'm going to read a list of things that could make life better for teens. Thinking specifically about yourself, please tell me how much, if at all, each would improve your life--a great deal, somewhat, not too much, or not at all? Please respond using a scale of 1 to 4 with where 1 = Not at all 2 = Not too much 3 = Somewhat 4 = A great deal. First...

		Total	Female	Male
a. Getting a job (Already have a job)	Not at all	5%	4%	7%
	Not too much	10%	9%	11%
	Somewhat	23%	24%	22%
	A great deal	62%	64%	60%
b. More affordable college or job training, for example having the training needed to get a job or have a career.	Not at all	3%	1%	5%
	Not too much	8%	6%	11%
	Somewhat	27%	26%	27%
	A great deal	62%	66%	57%
c. Spending more time with a parent or other adult	Not at all	6%	5%	8%
	Not too much	25%	22%	29%
	Somewhat	41%	39%	43%
	A great deal	28%	34%	21%
d. More access to sports and physical activities	Not at all	10%	10%	10%
	Not too much	25%	24%	27%
	Somewhat	35%	35%	36%
	A great deal	29%	30%	28%
	Don't know	0%	1%	0%
e. Going to a safer school.	Not at all	14%	11%	18%
	Not too much	14%	12%	17%
	Somewhat	31%	23%	42%
	A great deal	40%	53%	23%
	Don't know	0%	1%	0%

11. Now I have a few questions about issues affecting some teens today. Thinking specifically about teenagers or your friends and you, or teens in your school or town, please tell me if you feel the following things happen...a lot, sometimes, rarely, or never?

		Total	Female	Male
A. Unwanted physical contact such as pushing, shoving, bullying at school	A lot	23%	22%	23%
	Sometimes	40%	40%	39%
	Rarely	27%	25%	29%
	Never	10%	12%	8%
	Don't Know	0%	1%	0%
B. Physical abuse	A lot	8%	8%	7%
	Sometimes	27%	26%	28%
	Rarely	45%	44%	47%
	Never	21%	23%	18%
C. Sexual intimidation such as teasing or jeering	A lot	17%	20%	13%
	Sometimes	42%	42%	42%
	Rarely	27%	24%	31%
	Never	13%	14%	13%
D. Sexual assault	A lot	7%	10%	3%
	Sometimes	14%	16%	12%
	Rarely	42%	40%	45%
	Never	37%	33%	41%
	Don't Know	0%	1%	0%

12. Do you know a teenager who has been physically abused?

	Total	Female	Male
Yes	40%	39%	40%
No	60%	61%	60%

13. From what you know, has the physical abuse limited the teenager's participation in school, sports, social activities, or work? (Asked only to those who said "yes" to q12)

	Total	Female	Male
Yes	41%	45%	36%
No	58%	53%	64%
Don't Know	1%	2%	0%

14. Do you know a teenager who has experienced unwanted sexual behavior, such as unwanted comments, jeers, intimidation, forced physical contact or assault?

	Total	Female	Male
Yes	54%	63%	43%
No	46%	36%	57%
Don't Know	0%	1%	0%

15. From what you know, has the unwanted sexual behavior limited the teenager's participation in school, sports, social activities, or work? (Asked only to those who said "yes" to q14)

	Total	Female	Male
Yes	40%	43%	33%
No	58%	56%	63%
Don't Know	2%	1%	4%

16. If you were to have an adult that would be available to you anytime to talk or answer questions about issues in your life, what would you want to talk to them about? (ASK AS OPEN-ENDED)

	Total	Female	Male
School	24%	23%	25%
Your future	20%	19%	21%
Problems at home	1%	1%	1%
Problems with other kids	4%	4%	3%
Sex	2%	3%	1%
Drugs	2%	2%	2%
Alcohol	1%	1%	1%

Job issues	2%	1%	4%
Gender issues/gender identity	0%	0%	1%
General life problems/feelings	19%	19%	19%
Money	1%	1%	1%
Stress	2%	3%	2%
Relationships	3%	4%	2%
Peer pressure	2%	2%	1%
Other (SPECIFY)	13%	14%	11%
Don't Know	6%	4%	8%

18. Now I'm going to read you some statements about which I'd like your opinion. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree", please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement. You can use any number from 1 to 5. First...

		Total	Female	Male
a. I like the way I look	Strongly disagree	1%	1%	0%
	Disagree	3%	4%	2%
	Neither agree nor disagree	24%	24%	24%
	Agree	34%	34%	33%
	Strongly agree	38%	36%	41%
b. I get enough sleep	Strongly disagree	14%	14%	14%
	Disagree	23%	26%	19%
	Neither agree nor disagree	31%	28%	35%
	Agree	20%	18%	23%
	Strongly agree	12%	15%	9%
c. I get enough exercise	Strongly disagree	4%	5%	2%
	Disagree	16%	16%	17%
	Neither agree nor disagree	22%	21%	24%
	Agree	28%	29%	27%
	Strongly agree	30%	30%	30%
d. Exercise makes me feel good	Strongly disagree	1%	1%	1%
	Disagree	4%	5%	3%
	Neither agree nor disagree	14%	14%	15%
	Agree	33%	29%	38%
	Strongly agree	47%	51%	43%

e. I feel pressure to look like celebrities	Strongly disagree	44%	34%	56%
	Disagree	24%	24%	24%
	Neither agree nor disagree	17%	19%	13%
	Agree	11%	14%	6%
	Strongly agree	5%	9%	0%
	Don't Know	0%	1%	0%
f. Girls and boys should have equal opportunities to play sports.	Strongly disagree	1%	1%	2%
	Disagree	0%	0%	1%
	Neither agree nor disagree	1%	1%	2%
	Agree	11%	10%	13%
	Strongly agree	86%	89%	83%
g. Women and men should earn the same for the same work.	Strongly disagree	1%	0%	2%
	Disagree	0%	1%	0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	0%	0%	1%
	Agree	8%	6%	10%
	Strongly agree	91%	94%	88%
h. Girls and boys are equally good at math and science.	Strongly disagree	2%	1%	4%
	Disagree	4%	2%	6%
	Neither agree nor disagree	10%	11%	8%
	Agree	22%	24%	21%
	Strongly agree	62%	63%	62%
i. Men and women are equally qualified to be president.	Strongly disagree	1%	1%	1%
	Disagree	3%	2%	4%
	Neither agree nor disagree	6%	4%	7%
	Agree	17%	16%	18%
	Strongly agree	74%	77%	71%

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